

UC – Berkeley Seismic Observatory Mineral Withdrawal Extension

Background

The University of California – Berkeley operates a seismic observatory under Special Use Permit in an abandoned mine adit on the Klamath National Forest (KNF). An area of approximately 45 acres surrounding the observatory was withdrawn from mineral entry by the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 1996 for 20 years to protect the seismic integrity of the observatory (Public Land Order 7179). An Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice/FONSI were prepared by the KNF prior to withdrawal.

The mineral withdrawal has closed the 45-acre area to mineral location and entry (mining claims or mining of locatable minerals), but doesn't affect mineral leasing (*e.g.*, oil and gas development).

UC – Berkeley has requested and the KNF recommends extending the mineral withdrawal for another 20 years, until approximately January 24, 2036. The lands proposed for extension of the mineral withdrawal, located on the KNF's Scott River Ranger District, are described as:

NE¹/₄ SE¹/₄ and N¹/₂ NW¹/₄ SE¹/₄ of Sec. 24, T. 45 N., R. 8 W., Mount Diablo Meridian.

The purpose of extending the withdrawal is to prevent future mining activities from either disturbing the seismic equipment in the adit or creating "noise" in the general area that would interfere with the seismograph's accuracy.

The abandoned adit where the equipment is located is an excellent site for this seismograph because (1) it is close to road access, (2) it is adjacent to existing power and telephone lines which are required for operation of the seismograph, and (3) it has excellent seismic response characteristics because it is located on solid bedrock inside an adit and in an area with little background seismic noise such as from roads with daily traffic. The university has found that it is one of the best seismograph sites in northern California.

Decision To Be Made

The Department of Interior, BLM has responsibility for the decision on this mineral withdrawal extension per 43CFR §2310. The KNF must document circumstances on-the-ground in order to provide data for the Department of Interior BLM's decision on whether to extend the mineral withdrawal to protect the seismic integrity of the seismic observatory.

This action is administrative only and does not include the authorization of any new ground disturbing activities or changes to the withdrawal. The extension would represent a continuation of the existing conditions. This action would extend the withdrawal of the area to mineral location and entry, but not mineral leasing, for 20 years until approximately January 24, 2036.

If you wish to provide information concerning this proposal please send mail to: Klamath National Forest, 1711 South Main Street, Yreka, CA 96097, Attention: UC – Berkeley Mineral Withdrawal Extension. Receiving your input by November 24 would be most helpful for consideration of this action. For additional information contact: David Betz, Klamath National Forest Lands & Minerals at dbetz@fs.fed.us or 530-841-4423.

Thank you for your interest in the Klamath National Forest.